

***LBH announces LCBGP award to the St. Helena Parish Police Jury (May 11, 2012)***

The Louisiana Division of Administration (DOA) has announced its Louisiana Communities Broadband Grant Program (LCBGP) award to the St. Helena Parish Policy Jury (SHPPJ) for its “St. Helena Parish Broadband Feasibility Study.”

The goals of this project will be to provide the SHPPJ with a comprehensive recommendation of how broadband infrastructure should be developed within its parish. Specifically, the project will provide:

- GIS-based Broadband Analysis Project will analyze and forecast St. Helena Parish population demographics and the suitability of the parish for economic investments across a variety of industries.
- Software-based RF Propagation Study will determine the configurations of radios to achieve the range, penetration ability and capacity to overcome the obstacles confronting radio transmission within St. Helena Parish.
- Proposed Infrastructure Design will use the findings from the RF Propagation Study to determine the number of towers required to provide adequate coverage of St. Helena Parish, with the goal of reaching 90% of its population. The design will provide a complete specification of how to build the proposed wireless network – tower location, equipment required at each tower, internet backbone access locations, backhaul configurations, and subscriber unit configurations.
- Real World Study will analyze St. Helena demographics to project recurring broadband costs, as well as take rates after the installation of the proposed fixed wireless infrastructure, to assist SHPPJ in its decision-making processes.

LCBGP is a technical assistance program that is designed to fund broadband-related planning and demonstration projects among rural communities that are un-served or underserved by commercial broadband providers. LCBGP is funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 and requires a 20% project grantee match through cash and/or in-kind contributions.

“With its first Tuscaloosa Trend wells now in place, St. Helena Parish is clearly at a crossroads – trying to grow from an economically challenged area to a potential boomtown,” said David Moore, the State Broadband Grant Program Director. “The timing for this grant, to help the police jury map out its path towards reliable broadband service, could not come at a better time and we are excited to be a part of it”.

This marks the seventh award made through the LCBGP, since the program’s inception late last year. LBI staff anticipates making several additional awards in the coming weeks and look forward to partnering with award recipients to the benefit of the citizens of the targeted communities.